

subjects were so great that it was quite out of the question to bring about agreement. The controversy appears to have been unfortunately mixed up with personal and sectional issues which cannot be reconciled.

"I have consulted the Government, and I am authorised to say, both in respect of this Bill and of the other Bill referred to, that neither of them is a proper Bill, nor do I see any chance of making either of them a proper Bill, to carry out what we think should be the terms and purpose of a measure dealing with nurses' registration. With the best will in the world, it does not seem to be practical to make this a Bill which will secure passage into law. Therefore, I would suggest, whether in the interests of expediting nurses' registration those concerned in this Bill and in the other might think it wise to drop them, and I will undertake at the earliest possible time, on behalf of the Government, to introduce a measure providing for the registration of nurses.

As far as possible, I will consult them on the terms of the Bill as to its general and main purposes. Whilst on the one hand we cannot saddle a registration authority with duties that do not properly belong to it, nor can we promote the interests of any sectional institution, on the other hand we will deal with public interests, we will take those concerned into our confidence, and as far as possible I hope they will concur in what we propose.

A BONA-FIDE PLEDGE.

"We are prepared to make ourselves responsible for such proposals to Parliament, and to give effect to registration as soon as we can, subject to the exigencies of the Session. . . You may take that as a bona-fide pledge,

"On that understanding, I think it might be for the convenience of the House if both these Bills did not go any farther. I should like to say that we are very cognisant of the tact and patience shown by the hon. and gallant Member who is in charge of this Bill, and of the interest he has shown in nurses' registration. I fully recognise that. But from what I can learn, if this Bill does go to the Report stage to-day the chances of it finding its way to the Statute Book are very small indeed. The method I suggest is, after all, the shortest way and the best way to the end in view."

LIEUT.-COMMANDER ASTBURY IS DISAPPOINTED.

As the Constitution of the General Nursing Council is the most integral part of the Bill before the House of Commons, and has been discussed and recommended by Committee E, a motion that the sub-section dealing with this should be deleted and a totally new Constitution substituted on Report, can only be regarded as a wrecking amendment, and deceived no one who knows anything about Parliamentary procedure; and instead of substituting the College Bill Council, which provides for the representation of every

class of employer, Lieut.-Commander Astbury said: "I beg to move, in Sub-section (r), to leave out paragraphs (a) to (k) inclusive, and to insert instead thereof the words,

namely, one person to be appointed by the Privy Council, one person by the British Medical Association, two persons by the College of Nursing, Ltd., one person by the Royal British Nurses' Association, and thirty-seven nurses by election on the part of all nurses duly registered, the first election to take place on the expiration of two years from the passing hereof."

Continuing, Commander Astbury said: "I must say I have listened to the speech of the right hon. Gentleman with some disappointment. I thought there might be a chance of carrying out my suggestion. With regard to Clause 4 of the Bill, I am going to submit that the Council for governing the nurses should be a council composed mainly of nurses—a democratic body, on the principle of 'government of the nurses by the nurses.' We know that the supporters of the Bill before the House have made several charges against the Bill which is at present in the other House, or rather charges against the College of Nursing. One grave charge has been made that the reason why the College of Nursing have got such a large number of nurses on their register, namely, over 14,500, and funds to the extent of £40,000, has been that they have been blackmailing nurses to sign the register and held out the promise that they should be placed on the first State Register. It is needless for me to say that that is quite untrue, because the College could not have promised that."

We are surprised that Commander Astbury should have misled the House, when, if he knows anything about the methods of the College Company, he must know that the nurses have joined it on the following printed and unjustifiable pledge:—

Every Certificated Trained Nurse should apply at once for Registration by the College of Nursing—

1. Because the Council of the College of Nursing has drafted a "Nurses' Registration Bill," which provides that the Register already formed by the College of Nursing shall be the first Register under the Act.

If, therefore, you are on the College Register, you will automatically and without further fee be placed upon the State Register when the "Nurses' Registration Bill" is passed.

Commander Astbury further asserted that "a great many members of the Central Committee went over to the College." (This was a misleading statement). The only persons "who went over to the College" were the five delegates of the Association for Promoting the Registration of Nurses in Scotland, and the majority of them accepted office on the College Council at its inception and only retired from the Central Committee when invited to state which Bill they intended to support. This Society, however, has agitated to be included in the Central Committee's Bill since its introduction into the House of Commons.

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